

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 314151 TOSEC 340163
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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 314151 TOSEC 340163

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM SHLAUDEMAN

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: CASC, PFOR, MX

SUBJECT: ACTION MEMORANDUM: STATEMENT ON MOTOR TRAVEL
IN SINALOA

REFERENCE: TOSEC 340124

1. SINCE OUR LAST MESSAGE TO YOU ON THIS SUBJECT THERE HAS
BEEN WHAT APPEARS TO BE THE MURDER OF ANOTHER AMERICAN IN
SINALOA. (A SECOND SUCH MURDER WAS REPORTED LAST NIGHT FROM
THE MEXICO CITY CONSULAR DISTRICT.) ALSO, THE AAA HAS
ISSUED ITS TRAVEL ADVISORY WARNING MOTORISTS OF THE DANGER
OF HIGHWAY 15 AND QUOTING THE DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSES TO
QUESTIONS FROM AAA ABOUT TRAVEL IN SINALOA. WE CAN ANTI-
CIPATE INCREASING PRESS AND PUBLIC INTEREST. LARRY AND I
AGREED THAT THIS PROBLEM SHOULD BE PUT TO YOU IMMEDIATELY.
I BELIEVE THAT WE SHOULD ISSUE OUR STATEMENT TODAY.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 STATE 314151 TOSEC 340163

2. RECOMMENDATION: THAT YOU AUTHORIZE THE IMMEDIATE RE-
LEASE OF THE STATEMENT AT THE ATTACHMENT.

APPROVE DISAPPROVE

3. ATTACHMENT: MOTOR TRAVEL IN STATE OF SINALOA. WHILE LARGE NUMBERS OF AMERICANS HAVE SAFE AND ENJOYABLE VACATIONS IN MEXICO AND CAN EXPECT TO CONTINUE TO ENJOY THE TRADITIONAL MEXICAN HOSPITALITY, THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE HAS BECOME

INCREASINGLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE SAFETY OF AMERICAN TOURISTS TRAVELING IN OR THROUGH THE STATE OF SINALOA IN WESTERN MEXICO.

SINCE MAY 1976 THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL INCIDENTS INVOLVING HIGHWAY ROBBERY AND VIOLENT ASSAULT OF AMERICAN TRAVELERS BY ARMED BANDITS MOSTLY ON HIGHWAY 15 NEAR THE CITY OF CULIACAN IN THE STATE OF SINALOA. THESE INCIDENTS INCLUDE THREE DEATHS IN THE PAST MONTH AND TWO MOTORISTS HAVE BEEN REPORTED MISSING. GENERALLY MOTORISTS HAVE SUFFERED THE LOSS OF ALL OF THEIR POSSESSIONS INCLUDING THEIR VEHICLES.

THESE DEVELOPMENTS HAVE BEEN THE SUBJECT OF DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENTS OF MEXICO AND THE UNITED STATES. THE OFFICIALS OF THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT RECENTLY CONVEYED TO UNITED STATES EMBASSY OFFICIALS IN MEXICO CITY THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT'S DETERMINATION TO INSTITUTE NEW MEASURES IMMEDIATELY TO ASSURE TOURISTS' SAFE AND PLEASANT TRAVEL. ACCORDING TO THE INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT THERE WILL BE A NEW AND UNIQUE SYSTEM OF TOURIST PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE FROM THE BORDER AT NOGALES THROUGH HERMOSILLO TO MAZATLAN. THE FEATURES OF THIS SYSTEM INCLUDE HANDOUTS TO TOURISTS AT THE BORDER INDICATING APPROPRIATE PLACES TO STAY AND HOW TO CONTACT MEXICAN AUTHORITIES FOR ASSISTANCE, AND IMMEDIATE INCREASE

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 STATE 314151 TOSEC 340163

OF THE PATROLLING 'GREEN ANGEL' TOURIST ASSISTANCE UNITS FROM 5 TO 15.

THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE WELCOMES THESE NEW INITIATIVES AND ANTICIPATES THAT THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT WILL BE SUCCESSFUL IN CONTROLLING THIS SITUATION. IN THE MEANTIME WE ADVISE AMERICAN MOTORISTS THAT MOTOR TRAVEL THROUGH OR IN THE STATE OF SINALOA IN WESTERN MEXICO ENTAILS SUBSTANTIAL RISKS. THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE HAS INFORMED THE AMERICAN AUTOMOBILE ASSOCIATION OF THESE RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AFFECTING TOURIST TRAVEL IN THE STATE OF SINALOA, MEXICO.

ROBINSON

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